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RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

NEWS

*"We must open wider the doors of opportunity...
for the good of our country and all our people"*

President Eisenhower

U. S. Department of Agriculture ★
Washington, D. C.

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This issue of the NEWS reports on a wide variety of activity in the Rural Development Program in many States -- some of them as far apart (on the map) as Pennsylvania and New Mexico. It shows the widening range of economic and social development work generated as a result of this program. Top-level State planning, intensive county surveys, widening local support, diverse improvement projects -- these are recorded as the Rural Development Program gets under way in its first full year as a truly national program.

NEW MEXICO COUNTY PUTS EMPHASIS ON THREE MAIN PROJECTS:

Santa Fe County, New Mexico, has been in the field with a Rural Development Program since December 1955, when Associate Director of Extension A. E. Triviz (now Dean of Agriculture) and members of his staff met with leaders in the county to plan their pilot work. Deciding that the county's three most pressing problems -- activities for rural youth, the need for organized farm marketing, and conservation -- called for priority attention, they set up three subcommittees to plan and carry forward development projects meeting these problems. The group dealing with youth activities has been working to increase recreation opportunities in the county, playground improvement, as one example. The marketing committee has centered its attention on market resource fact finding, planning for cooperatives, and promoting improved marketing among growers. At the request of the Rural Development Committee, a watershed protection plan has been drawn up by the Soil Conservation District, and will be put into operation by the two groups working together. Santa Fe leaders are also looking into other development projects, and have had several meetings with staff members of such State agencies as the economic development commission and the youth commission.

Nation-wide recognition has been given the outstanding rural community improvement program in western North Carolina through publication in the December Reader's Digest of an article, "When the Whole Town Pulls Together." Written by John Strohm, the article originally appeared in November's Farm Journal. It gives a vivid picture of what rural communities around Asheville have done to improve farm, home, and community living.

This is one of a series of periodic reports on Rural Development Program activities of business, farm, civic, government and other community leadership working together. If you have information that might be of interest to those active in the program or you wish to receive this Newsletter, address communications to the Editor, Rural Development Program News, Office of Information, Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C.

AID IN LOW-PRODUCTION COUNTIES GEARED TO SPECIFIC GROUPS: Texas farm people in low-production counties may be classified in one of four categories, according to a recent report of the Agricultural Economics and Sociology Department, Texas A. and M. College. Those in the first group have good possibilities of improving their standard of living through farming. A second group, including many young people, show little interest in farming, want and need other jobs. The third category includes people who live on farms but depend mostly on work in industry and trades. And finally there are the older people and the disabled. A development program, says the report, should be designed "to give special consideration to each one of these groups." (If you want a copy of this Texas report, Some Suggestions for Working with People on Low-Production Farms, write the Rural Development Program NEWS, Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C.)

FACT-FINDING AND ORGANIZATION IN PENNSYLVANIA PROGRAM: Early in October Pennsylvania's Dean of Agriculture, L. E. Jackson, called the first meeting at Harrisburg of agencies interested in the Rural Development Program to discuss progress in Fayette County, the State's first pilot county, and plan for future work. With representatives of both agricultural and non-agricultural agencies attending the meeting, Rex Carter, county agent in Fayette, described what had been done there and the main problems. Fayette has a large population and diverse industry, and is meeting complex economic problems growing out of reduced coal mining and limited agriculture on small, often residential farms.

As a first step in the Rural Development Program, six areas in the county were selected for an intensive survey of resources and needs of farm people. Besides this basic survey, under guidance of the Pennsylvania State University, the departments of labor and of public instruction have been evaluating labor skills and education programs in relation to needs in the county.

In mid-November members of the county extension association, attending their annual meeting, reviewed the county's Rural Development Program. Theodore S. Gold, Assistant to the Under Secretary of Agriculture, met with the group to discuss their organization and planning.

PERRY COUNTY ADVERTISES ITS RESOURCES: The Perry County, Indiana, Planning Committee has published a short, concise statement of the county's resources and potential importance to manufacturers looking for a site "in the heart of the Ohio Valley Industrial Region." According to the statement, Perry County can boast of an excellent

labor supply, unlimited quantities of good water, good transportation convenient to industrial centers, and most important, "the Ohio River." Perry was recently named as the Indiana Rural Development Program pilot county.

IN MISSOURI, THREE AGENCIES TAKE THE LEAD: Three major State agencies are spearheading the Rural Development Program in Missouri's pilot counties -- Dent, Douglas, and Taney. In close cooperation with county leaders, these agencies, the Missouri Extension Service, Resources and Development Commission, and Conservation Department have stepped up their work in the counties to assure a unified attack on problems of economic development.

Make up of the Missouri Rural Development Committee also reflects the intention of State leaders to gain a broadly-based program. The committee includes representatives of employment and resource development agencies, farm groups, and the college of agriculture, as well as government agencies dealing with agriculture.

COUNTY-TRADE AREA PROGRAM RELATIONSHIP IN KENTUCKY: Kentucky's Rural Development Program is organized on a trade area basis in three sections of the State. The State Rural Development Committee meeting in October decided to establish two separate programs in each of the trade areas -- one at the area level and one in the counties. The county program will emphasize technical services strengthening farming and family living. The trade area program will bring together organizations and agencies contributing to economic and social betterment for a unified drive toward area progress. Meetings in key pilot areas to make plans for the program were held early in November.

USDA SENDS PROGRAM GUIDE TO STATE LEADERS: To help many pilot county leaders -- especially chairmen and secretaries of county Rural Development Committees -- gain a better understanding of program organization and objectives, and available services from government agencies, the Department of Agriculture has distributed to the States a Rural Development Program Guide and information file. The latter is a set of booklets and similar material published by the five Federal departments with responsibility in the program which describe their activities -- including agricultural services, business and industry development, and cooperative programs in health, education, welfare, and labor fields.

The guide was prepared principally for State and local leaders in the Rural Development Program. However, any rural-urban community

interested in organized economic improvement programs may find it useful. (To get a copy, write Rural Development Program News, Office of Information, USDA, Washington 25, D. C.)

FEDERAL RESERVE OFFICIAL URGES MORE EFFICIENT SMALL FARMS: Rural area economic development is essential to the continued strength and growth of agriculture in a rapidly expanding American economy, according to Charles N. Shepardson, Member, Board of Governors, Federal Reserve System. In a speech before Louisiana Extension's Farm and Home Assembly, Mr. Shepardson said that "we should exert every effort" to help farmers on inefficient farms increase and modernize their operations. Where that is impossible they should be aided in finding off-farm jobs. His four-point program for agricultural progress: better conservation, new outlets for farm production, rural development, and better management -- especially credit management -- on farms.

IN BRIEF

Two major organizations, the National Grange and the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, have announced their interest in progress being made in rural development and urged a stepped-up, strengthened program.

-- At the annual meeting last month of Negro professional agricultural workers, Tuskegee Institute, Alabama, the Rural Development Program was a main topic of discussion. Both Don Paarlberg, assistant to the Secretary of Agriculture, and L. I. Jones, field representative, Federal Extension Service, spoke on the program.

-- The Georgia Rural Development Committee has named Habersham County to replace Hancock as a pilot county in the Rural Development Program. State committee representatives are presently helping local people organize a program in the new pilot county.

-- In a recent speech dealing with rural development in Oklahoma, Under Secretary of Agriculture True D. Morse said that more than one-half the farms in 20 northeast counties of the State are part-time and residential. Off-farm employment, he said, "is a way to make it practical for farm families to continue to live out in the country -- on their farms."

-- The Department of Agriculture has published a bibliography on rural community programs and their organization. Each listing tells briefly what the book or article contains. (Rural Community Organization, Selected Annotated References, Miscellaneous Publication 729, U. S. Government Printing Office, 60 cents)